

A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

## Her MAJESTY,

At WHITEHALL;

On Sunday, June 25. 1693.

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By SAMUEL FULLER D. D.

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and Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.*

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SEERMON

THE MATHEMATICS

AT WHITEHALL

BY RALPH JULIUS D.D.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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St. Matthew, Chap. VI. Vers. 23.

*But if thine Eye be Evil, the whole Body shall be full of Darknes: If therefore that Light that is in thee be Darknes, How great is that Darknes?*

**O**UR Blessed Saviour in this and the foregoing Verse has compared the inward Light of the practical Judgment, to the outward Sight of the Bodily Eye; A Comparison very usual amongst the Antient Moral Philosophers, as *Grotius* upon these Words has observed, and proved by several Quotations.

And there is indeed a peculiar Resemblance and Agreement betwixt them, as to their several Offices and Effects, their Perfections and Imperfections, with the Advantages or Disadvantages of either: For as the Natural Motions and Actions of the Body are guided by the outward Eye, so the Moral Life and Conversation of the Man is directed and governed by the inward Light of the Mind, and very evil Consequences attend us both in our Natural and Spiritual Interests, as these Guides fail or miscarry in their Conduct.

When the Organ of Sight is defective in any of its Parts and Instruments, or depraved and obstructed by a Flux of unnatural and vicious Humours, the Eye can neither apprehend nor distinguish its proper Objects, nor direct the Body to avoid those things that contradict, or to pursue those things that are necessary to its Happiness and Satisfaction.

All Diseases, Defects, and Disorders in the Eye, are uneasie and troublesome, because in a most useful and most sensible Part; But the loss of Sight is the most Calamitous Evil that can befall us: For it not only bereaves us of the greatest Pleasures of Life, but also puts us under the necessity of the Mercy of others to assist us in those Actions which are necessary to preserve and defend it.

But the Consequence is much more Dreadful; when the Spiritual Eye is Evil; and the Light within us Darkness; when the Conscience or Practical Judgment neither attends, nor considers the general Notices of its Duty, nor is directed by its proper Light, but perverted with false Principles, or depraved with sensual Affections, mistakes Evil for Good, and Error for Truth; And the Mischiefs of this Spiritual Darkness do as far exceed those of the Natural, as the Interests and Perfections of the Soul surpass those of the Body.

For the Mind, Conscience or Spirit of the Man is the Candle of the Lord, as *Solomon* has Styled it; and receiv'd Lustre and Authority from the Great  
Creator,



Creator, that it might be both a Shining and Burning Light to direct and incite us to our Duty, and we shall be accountable to Him that made us, if we neglect or disobey its Conduct; For whether we consider it with its Native Brightness, receiv'd at first from the Father of Lights; or with that Additional Lustre it had from that Son, who is the express Image of his Fathers Glory, and enlightneth every Man that cometh into the World, it is our safest and surest Guide: For if we follow the Conduct of this Luminary, it will direct and lead us into the Inheritance in Light; but if we dispise or contradict its Natural or Reveal'd Illuminations, either walking not in the Light, or detaining it in Unrightousness, our future Portion will be utter Darkness, amongst those that loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were Evil.

And Three Things are very evident from these Words.

*First*, That there is in every Man a Conscience or Practical Judgment, which is to be the Guide and Director of all our Actions, there is a Spiritual Eye and Light within us.

*Secondly*, That this Conscience may abuse its Office, mistake its Measures, be corrupted by false Principles, prejudice, and sensual Affections, and mislead us into dangerous Errors and evil Practices: This Eye may be Evil, this Light may be Darkness.

*Thirdly*, That the greatest Misfortune that can befall us, is to have our Consciences depraved and corrupted, *if the Light within us be Darkness, how great, how mischievous, is that Darkness?*

First, That there is in every Man a Conscience, or practical Judgment, a Spiritual Eye or Light within him.

All those Glorious Bodies of Light which GOD Created and fixed in the upper Regions of the Universe, to give lustre and a bright Paraphrase to the material part of the Creation, and to render the Works of his Hands Visible and Conspicuous, afford neither direction nor entertainment to Beings Insensible and Inanimate, but those Creatures only which have proper Organs to perceive their Light, enjoy Pleasure and Conduct from it.

And all the Laws of God and Man, though published and promulged with the greatest Evidence and Demonstration, would signifie nothing to Human Nature, were there not a Faculty in us to understand the Law, judge of its Authority, and apply its Obligation; This is the Eye which perceives the Light, and knows how to make use of its Conduct; the Organ that understands how to accommodate the Rule to practice, and to regulate Action by the determin'd proportions of Good and Evil; and without this, Man would be as incapable a Subject of Laws, as those Creatures that have no Sense, or those that have only Sense to govern them: And since  
there

there is such Use and Necessity of this Faculty, what need can there be of further Argument to prove it ? Or rather, What need of any Appeal to Argument in this matter, so evident to the inward Sense and Apprehension of every Man who Reflects and Considers ?

No Man pretends to throw away a Demonstration to Convince him who will not Believe the Sun Shines, when his Eyes assure him it does ; nor to satisfy him who disputes the Evidence of any Sense, where the Organ is in due Order ; and all Circumstances just and proportionate.

The Philosopher that pretended against the Testimonies of Sense, to prove there was no Motion, because of some difficulties in the Nature of it that were not easily Explicable, had as Wise a Refutation as he deserved by him, who took a turn in his School to assert the Truth of the matter of Fact, and left the Philosopher to Glory in the Vanity of his insignificant Speculation.

Now the outward Eye and the inward Light, as they bear proportion and resemblance in their Offices and Effects, so also in their Evidence and Authority ; and it will be equally Unnatural and Unreasonable to suspect the Testimony of the one, as of the other ; and he will as little deserve a Demonstration to Convince him, who disputes the Evidence of his inward, as he that questions the Testimony of his outward Senses, for the Folly of both is a-like Absurd and Ridiculous. And

And therefore it will be to no purpose to labour to prove that by Argument, which is sufficiently Demonstrated to every Man by inward Testimony; for there is no likelihood those Men should be Convinced by anothers Reasoning, who will not believe themselves in a matter so evident to their own.

It cannot be denied but that the Use of Reason may be wholly lost in some, and the Exercise of Reason weakned and depraved in others; And where the Use of Reason is lost, there the Conduct of Conscience ceases, it being nothing but the Exercise of Reason in order to practice, and according to the Degrees of the Depravation of Reason, the Influence and Authority of Conscience will, as to some Acts in proportion, weaken and decay.

And yet it will be impossible for Conscience to be wholly lost as to the Principle or Exercise, where the Use of Reason remains; Nor can any Man be insensible of its influence in some proportion, there being so many Acts and Offices by which Conscience exerts its Authority over us: For whether it Dictates, Testifies, Accuses, Excuses, Binds, or Looses, these are but the several Acts of the same Principle called Conscience, in its Conduct and Government of Moral Actions, and no Man that makes Use of his Reason in Acting, deliberates when he Acts, considers what he does, and reflects upon what he has done, but has had Experience of all those instances of the Power and Authority of Conscience in him.

And

And this indeed is that Principle which most eminently distinguishes us from the Beasts that Perish ; For though it cannot be denied but that those Creatures we call Sensitive, have a resemblance of some sort of Reasoning in many of their Actions, yet there are no footsteps of Conscience, or the practical Understanding to be found amongst them, neither was there any necessity for it ; for Sense and Instinct are competent Principles of Natural Actions, and abundantly sufficient to conduct them through all the Necessities, Pleasures, and Satisfactions of this Life ; and they having no further prospect, can need no other Principle of Conduct.

But Human or Moral Actions require Nobler Principles to Govern them ; they suppose us under the Obligation of Laws, are always Good or Evil, and render us accountable to a Superiour Power : The Soul is an Immortal Being, and the Mind of Man is indued with Impressions and Apprehensions of its own Immortality, and can never Conduct it self by the measures of Prudence, unless it have a regard to its State and Condition in the other World, and the future Event of all its Actions, and therefore Human Actions are under the Government of Conscience, which is nothing else but the Mind of Man Acting with a regard to God and His Government.

For Conscience is God's Deputy, and Acts by His Commission, it Dictates in His Name, Censures  
by



by His Authority, Refers us to His Sentence, and Assigns us over to Answer for all our Actions at the Bar of the Supream Judge of Heaven and Earth.

For as nothing can oblige Conscience but Divine Authority, so Conscience always Appeals to God as its Judge and Legislator; and therefore the Apostle St. Paul has observed of those that *were a Law unto themselves*, and had no other Rule of Action but *the Law of Nature written in their Hearts*, that they had Consciences bearing Witness, *viz.* to his Authority who had promulged the Law, and Thoughts accusing or excusing them according to the measures of their Disobedience or Obedience to it; and that even those who were *fill'd with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, and Maliciousness*, and not only *did those Things that were contrary to Nature*, but had also *Pleasure in those that did them*, had knowledge and apprehension of the Judgment of God, that *those who committed such Things were worthy of Death*, Rom. 1, 2.

For the Finger of God that Imprinted the Law of Nature upon our Hearts, has pointed to the Author of the Impression, and directed us to the Divine Authority that imposed the Law.

And the Infinite Wisdom of the Creator has so Framed us, that his Laws obtain their Power and Authority over us by the Consent and Application of our own Natures, so that we cannot Disobey him, but we must disapprove our selves: For as Conscience

Science is the Principle and Director, so it is the Witness and Judge of all our Actions; it bears Testimony to the Authority we Offend, gives Evidence of the Guilt of the Offence, and passes Judgment upon the Offender, and shall be the final Executioner of the Divine Wrath upon the Disobedient.

By the Mistakes of Human Judicatories the Innocent may receive Judgment for that Guilt of which they have no Sense nor Conviction within themselves; but at the final Bar of the Divine Justice, none shall be Condemned by GOD but he that is *Avowed*, Self-Condemned, for Judgment shall be given from the Records of the Sinners own Conscience, and he cannot but with Silence and Confusion acknowledge the Justice of that Sentence, which upon full Evidence and Conviction he had passed upon himself before.

I conclude therefore, That as Conscience is the necessary Principle of the Rational Conduct of Moral Actions, so it is a necessary Witness for GOD in Man to preserve a Sense and Approbation of the Justice of the Divine Government in all the Events of Human Actions.

That there is a Conscience is the inward Sense and Apprehension of every Man who Reflects and Considers his Actions; But what this Conscience is, is not so easily Defined, nor so distinctly Apprehended by every one that perceives its Influence:

For as Conscience is a comprehensive Principle, defined by a complexion of Notices, and demonstrated by several Acts, so it is a comprehensive and ambiguous Word, and has various Acceptions and Significations; Sometimes it is taken Subjectively for the practical Intellect, as when we say the Laws of Nature are written in our Consciences; Sometimes formally for the habitual Persuasion and Application of those Principles which are the Rule of Conscience, as we say, he is a Good Man, and makes Conscience of his Ways, or he is a Profligate Person, and has no Conscience in him, or has lost his Conscience; that is, he has lost that usual persuasion and recourse to the Principles of Conscience, by which Good Men Govern their Actions: Or else, Thirdly, Conscience is used Effectively for any single Operation or Action of Conscience, as when we say in particular, such a Man makes a Conscience of Swearing, Lying, or the like; but this last is included in the second as a particular of that general Acception.

Thus we commonly Speak, apprehend and distinguish Conscience, but we must consider more fully, and unite the Faculty, Habit, and Exercise together, to define and make a compleat Notion of Conscience; and therefore those that pretend to Define it, say, *Conscience is the Mind of Man, Govern'd by Rule, and measur'd by the Proportions of Good and Evil, in order to Practice, to conduct all our Relations, and*  
all.

all our Entercourses betwixt GOD, our Neighbours, and our Selves, in all Moral Actions; And so Bishop Taylor, according to his usual *Copia* in his *Ductus dubitanti-um* has Defin'd it; Or as Bishop Sanderson, a most accurate Casuist, has more Scholastically described it, *Conscience is the Faculty or Habit of the practical Intellect, whereby the Mind of Man, by the Discursive Acts of Reasoning, applies its present Light to the Conduct of Moral Actions.*

And in both, or either of these Definitions, we have a compleat Notion of the Nature of Conscience; but the necessary and essential Parts, as the genus Subject, Object and Act of Conscience, are more nicely and distinctly described in the latter.

First, The Genus of Conscience is *Habit*, and so the Bishop (though for some other Reasons he has joyn'd with it *Faculty* in the Definition) has concluded that Conscience is properly, formally, and by direct Predication a *Habit*. *Sander. Prælect. 1. pag. 16.*

2. The Subject of Conscience is the Practical Understanding; the Understanding, not the Will; the Practical, not the Speculative Understanding.

For First, Conscience does not acquiesce in its Notions as the speculative Understanding does, but has a direct tendency to apply them to Practise. *Prælect. 1. pag. 20.*

Secondly, Conscience is a sort of Science, for as Science properly so called is a speculative conclusion from the first Principles of Truth and

'Falshood, so Conscience is a practical conclusion  
'from the first Principles of Good and Evil; and  
therefore as it has the Nature of Science, so it  
must be seated in the same Faculty that Science is.

'Thirdly, Conscience is capable of Errour, and  
'therefore since Errour is the proper Disease of the  
'Understanding, the Understanding must be the  
'proper Subject of Conscience.

I conclude therefore, That the proper Subject of  
Conscience is the practical Understanding, and the  
practical Notices imprinted there. Whether by  
Nature or Revelation, are the Rule by which it is  
Govern'd, and Governs us, and from whence it in-  
fers the Obligation of Duty, and to which it Ap-  
peals when it accuses or excuses, convicts or ab-  
solves upon Action; and nothing indeed can pre-  
tend to be a Rule of Conscience, or a Principle fit  
to direct the proportions of Good and Evil in Moral  
Actions, but what is allow'd and approv'd by the  
practical Intellect, and derived or pretended to be  
derived from the Command of GOD, who can on-  
ly oblige Human Consciences, and therefore the  
Erroneous Conscience obliges under the disguise of  
a right Conscience, pretends to be Govern'd by the  
Dictates of the practical Understanding, and to de-  
rive its mistaken Principles and Perswasions from the  
Authority of Nature and Revelation, and under this  
Conviction to him that is thus persuaded; it has the  
Nature and Pretence of a right Conscience, or else  
it could not oblige.

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The Third Thing to be considered is the Object of Conscience, and that is all Moral or Praef. 1. pag. 21. Human Actions, all those Actions which are Good or Evil in themselves, or may be made so by Circumstance, whatsoever is done by us as reasonable Creatures, is in our own Power, may fall under Choice or Deliberation, and render us liable to Reward or Punishment for doing or omitting it, and it is the proper Province of Conscience to direct or forbid, approve or disapprove such Actions.

Fourthly, The last Thing considerable in the Nature of Conscience, is that Act by which Conscience Influences, Judges, and Governs Moral Actions, and that is by the application of its present Light, whether Natural or Revealed, arising from the Principles of Nature or Revelation, or the necessary consequences of those Principles deduced by Reason, and this application is made by a discursive Act of Reasoning, for Universals and Particulars cannot be Connected, nor general Rules and Propositions direct particular Cases and Actions, without an Act of Reasoning, nor until Conscience applies its Light to enquire of Actions done, or to direct Actions to be done: In the first two Things are enquired, whether the Action were done, or no, and with what Choice and Deliberation, and whether it were well or ill done, a good or evil Action; In the first, Conscience proceeds as a Witness; In the second,

Praef. 1.  
pag. 24.

as a Judge, and pronounces Sentence by approving or disapproving the Action, and by absolving or condemning the Actor, in the direction of future Actions. Conscience has the Nature of a Legislator, Monitor, and Counsellor; and if we Obey the Commands and Directions of Conscience, we shall have no reason to fear its Testimony or Judgment.

And from these particulars distinctly considered, it will be as easie to frame a compleat Notion of the Nature of that Principle of Moral Action we call Conscience, as to conclude from the several instances of its Influence and Conduct, that there is such a Principle in every Man.

For as Conscience is a Light to direct and guide us, so it manifests and demonstrates it self in all the circumstances of Human Life, by a Universal Regard to present, past, and future Action: When Temptation assaults and inclines to Evil Action, Conscience is ready to interpose, admonish, and dissuade us from it; If the Temptation prevails upon us, Conscience Resists, Regrets, Checks, and Upbraids the Undertaking, after the Commission; it Objects, Convicts, Reproves, Accuses, Condemns, and Afflicts us for it.

When occasion of doing Good is offered, Conscience incites, persuades, and encourages to do it; After it is done, it defends, approves, and applauds the Action, and fills us with joy, confidence, and complacency upon the Reflection. A Principle  
which

*The Queen*  
which exerts it self in so many several Instances, and exercises such a general and various Influence over Human Actions, cannot be undiscovered, but every Man who Thinks and Reasons, (and he that does not has no pretence to that Name) will perceive, apprehend, and acknowledge its Authority.

The Mad-Man may Phansie there is no Sun ; The Fool may say, *There is no God* ; And the Profligate may pretend there is no Conscience ; But the Sun will be still evedent by its own Light ; The Power and Wisdom of the Invisible Godhead Demonstrated by the Things that he hath made ; And the Authority of Conscience Attested by the inward Sense and Apprehension of every Man who Reflects and Considers.

And this may suffice upon the first particular ; That there is in every Man a Conscience, or practical Judgment, to be the Guide and Director of all our Actions ; There is a Spiritual Eye and Light within us.

*Secondly*, That this Conscience may abuse its Office, mistake its Measures, be perverted by false Principles, prejudice, and sensual Affections, and mislead us into dangerous Errors and evil Practices : This Eye may be Evil, this Light may be Darknes. And in an Age so generally Corrupted and Depraved both in Principles and Practices, it will be easier to find an evil than a good Eye, a corrupt than a sound Conscience ; For tho' God Almighty has delivered

to Mankind perfect Measures of Good and Evil, Truth and Falshood, yet Inconsideration, Passion, Prejudice, and sensual Affection, do so generally deprave our Minds, and interrupt the influence of those Principles which should Govern us, that we so imperfectly receive, apprehend, and apply them, that most Men mistake Evil for Good, and Errour for Truth.

That the Conscience may be Corrupted by sensual Affection, and subjugate the Wisdom of the Spirit to the Follies of the Flesh; That the *Law of the Members* may Triumph over the *Law of the Mind*, and lead us *Captive to the Law of Sin and Death*; That Men may forget themselves and their Reasons, their God and their Religion, their present Happiness and future Hopes, and run with Greediness, Pleasure, and Satisfaction, to the Commission of that Extravagance which Nature abhors, and GOD and Reason forbid, under the Sense, Apprehension, and inward Testimony of a future Judgment, is too sadly evident in the General Conversation of Christians.

That Conscience may Err in its Notions of Truth will need no Demonstration to him that considers the Diversity and Contrariety of Opinions in Matters of Religion, which disturb and divide the Christian World; Both sides cannot be in the Right, because in many Articles they contradict one another; and yet with the same Zeal and Assurance they assert  
and

and maintain their distinctive Propositions, as if neither were in the Wrong ; but still in the Heat of Dispute and Argument, they so frequently mistake the Controversie, and so often misapprehend one another, that it is very evident they do not always differ in the Matter, where they disagree in the Opinion. And therefore notwithstanding all the Fierceness of Contradiction in many of their Debates, both may be in the Right ; and were they Governed by the Principles of the Christian Religion, none of their Differences in Opinion could be the Occasion of Malice, Hatred, or Uncharitableness amongst them. But Conscience is often pretended to justify the Sincerity of the Erroneous, where the Error is generally the Effect of a worse Principle.

That Christians should differ about those Points of Religion where they do not disagree ; that they should be most angry where they differ least, and where the Difference is of the least Consequence ; that there should be a more sensible Warmth amongst them for the distinctive Articles of a Party, than for the common Principles and Foundations of our Religion, are evident Arguments that Passion and Interest have a greater Influence in the Divisions of Christians than Conscience, though oftner pretended, and that want of Charity is the principal Cause in multiplying the Controversies of Religion.

But three things are necessary to preserve Conscience from Corruption, both in Principle and Practise.

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*First,*



*First*, It is necessary to be sensible of the Weakness and Infirmary of Natural Conscience; not only that it may be mistaken, but that it is easily imposed on, subject to Error, and apt to be deceived; not only that it may offend when it mistakes, but that it is disposed and inclined to follow those erroneous Impressions it receives, and to make them the Rule and Measures of Action; and nothing renders Conscience so fatally Frail, as a Confidence and Security against the Impressions and Consequences of Error, for this makes us negligent of that Care and Watchfulness that is necessary to preserve the Integrity of Conscience.

*Secondly*, Conscience must be rightly informed, and thorowly perswaded of the Evidence and Obligation of the Truth and Certainty of those Principles that are to be the Rules of its Conduct; for Conscience is weak and indetermin'd in its self, but easily and chearfully applies to Action, when it is agreed in the Measures and Proportions that ought to govern it; and since the Law of God; comprised in the Books of Nature and Revelation, is the compleat and adequate Rule of Conscience, we must study our selves and the Holy Scriptures, for there the greater Lines of our Duty are so fairly imprinted, that no Man can be ignorant of the Rule of Action, without stupid Inconsideration, Negligence, or perverse Obstinacy.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly,* To preserve Conscience from Corruption, we must not only understand and believe the Nature and Perfection of our Rule, but also attend, consider, and apply the Rule to Practise: The most perfect Body of Ethicks, understood, digested and believed, cannot make us good Moralists, unless we govern our Manners by those Precepts it teacheth; for it is not the Science of Morals, but the Practise of Morality, that is, Actions done with Reflection, and under the Influence of those Principles which should direct Conscience, that recommend our Consciences to God and Man; for the Principle of Action makes up a considerable part of the Character and Merit of Action, and a right Principle is absolutely necessary with the Perfection of the other Circumstances to compleat the Integrity of a good Action.

And thus we must be governed, if we would make a right Judgment of our Actions, and a comfortable Account for them.

But most Men pass their Lives without thinking, and either perform their Actions mechanically, as Sense and Circumstance determine them, without considering the Rule and End of Moral Action, or by such Principles which fall not under the Influence of Conscience, nor are agreeable to the proper Measures of its Conduct.

And there are Four Principles which generally influence Humane Actions, which either imply no

Deliberation at all, or only such Thoughts which are inconsistent with those wiser Considerations, which should direct Conscience, and they are *Chance, Sense, Custom, Interest.*

*First, Chance,* and this is a Principle which governs a great part of the unthinking World, which is indeed the greatest part of Mankind; and as he that is under the Influence of this Principle is always careless and thoughtless, so by the Consequence of his Principle, he is bound to be so: He finds himself in the World, and as he knows not, nor considers why he came there, so to secure his Quiet in it, he concludes he was the Effect of *Chance*, and born at all Adventures, and therefore he receives his Fate as it happens, without Hope or Fear, and troubles not himself to manage and improve Accidents to his own particular Interest, or to serve the general Ends of the World; for he believes this World was the Effect of the casual Concourse of necessary Causes, which had no Design in making, nor have in governing it; but that all Events are determined in it by the same fatal *Chance* which produced it at first; and therefore he looks backwards and forwards with equal Indifference, and Inconsideration; and as he came into this World without any Knowledge or Design, so he goes out of it without any Thought or Regard to another; believing, according to the Conclusion of the Sensualist, in the Book of Wisdom, *that he shall be hereafter as though he had never been.*

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But there are others, who, though they own an All-wise Creator and Governor of the World, yet have laid as certain Foundations of Fatal Necessity as the Former, by asserting, That God Almighty has by Inconditional and Absolute Decrees, determined the Fate of all Humane Actions, and the necessary State of every Man's present and future Happiness or Misery; and this Doctrine has by an unhappy Influence, driven many Men to the Conduct of *Chance*, and that in Matters of the greatest Interest and Concern; for though in their present Temporal Affairs they seem to act by other Measures, and to renounce the Consequence of this Principle, yet in their remoter, spiritual, and more considerable Interests, they are wholly guided by it, and have concluded, that it is to no purpose to consider and make use of the Means of Salvation, or to busie themselves about the hidden Events of Eternity, but to await the Issues of that Fate which is irresistible and irreversible. And indeed if there be a Fatal Necessity, it is all one whether it be the Effect of Necessary or Voluntary Causes, and it will be equally ridiculous in either Case, to endeavour to resist or contradict it, for in such Circumstances, the wisest thing we can do, will be to think and do nothing; for Fate will have its Effect, do what we can to the contrary. But since this Doctrine of Fatal Necessity is a Pretence that contradicts the general Sense and Practise of the wisest Part of Mankind, and can  
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be resolved into no better Principles than Atheism or Blasphemy, it ought to be rejected by every good Christian as Impious and abominable.

*Secondly*, The Second Principle of Conduct in inconsidering Men, is *Sense*, and this indeed is a Principle within us, and a part of our selves; it has Appetites and Necessities which are Natural and Important, and may, and must be satisfied; it is a useful Instrument and Companion of the Soul, and attends and serves it in this State of Union in the most abstracted Operations of Reasoning and Devotion. Upon the good Order of *Sense* depend the Health and Vigor of the Mind, and by its innocent Pleasures and Satisfactions, the Soul is refreshed and quickned, the Union preserved, and the Society and Conduct of Reason secured in full Influence and Authority. It has Organs of Discipline, Science and Faith too; by our Eyes we behold the Beauty and Glory of the visible Creation, and are lead thereby to admire and believe the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of the Creator; by our Ears we receive the glad Tidings of Salvation, and are taught those Arguments which convince us of the Truth, and bring us to the Advantages and Rewards of our Holy Religion; for *Faith cometh by hearing*: And if that Opinion of some Ancient and Modern Philosophers be true, That there is nothing in the Understanding but what is sometime or other derived thither by our *Senses*, we shall owe to our *Senses* all the Noti-



ces of God, Nature and our Selves, and all the Principles of Knowledge, and Conduct in Philosophy and Religion; such Obligations will deserve and require Respect from us, and it will be always Just and Natural to please and gratifie our *Senses*, and to allow them their Influence and Authority, as a dear Part of our selves.

And to encourage our Compliance and Submission, we have had a particular Experiment of the good and happy Government of *Sense*, for our earliest and most innocent Days were those, when *Sense* ruled alone; but since Reason began to command, Care and Guilt have disturbed and defiled us, and the Innocent Follies of Infancy are changed into the deliberate Crimes of Age, and we have Sins both of the Flesh and Spirit to answer for.

These are the plausible Arguments of the Advocates of *Sense*, and are sufficient to assert its due Right and Influence over us, but not to justify that illimited and extravagant Authority which most Men indulge to their *Senses*. For if we look into the World, we shall find a great Number of Men (not to say the greatest part of Mankind) who are so wholly employed in the Pleasures and Satisfactions of *Sense*, and bear so little regard to the Interests of Reason, that were we to judge of their Nature by their Lives, it would be difficult to distinguish them from the common Herd of sensitive Creatures, for they live as if they had no other Principle

ciple of Conduct but *Sense*, the Effects and Influence of Reason being as invisible in their Conversions, as that Principle which should reason and govern in them, is in its Nature; if they exert Reason, it is to employ it in the meanest Services, to cater and provide for their Lusts, and to manage the Intrigues of the Flesh, to give a Curiosity to Luxury, and a Delicacy to those Repasts of *Sense* which the Brutes enjoy in more reasonable Measures, and with a more innocent *Decorum*, under the sole Conduct of Nature and Instinct. For the Brute Beasts know nothing of the Arts of indulging *Sense* and pampering the Flesh, but pursue and enjoy for the Ends and Uses of Life, and by the Measures of Nature, and are at Ease when that is satisfied; but these more brutish Men have debased Reason to minister to the Flesh, and have rendered the Flesh more ungovernable by the Aid of those Faculties, which should have given it Rule and Limitation, they desire by the Measures of pampered Appetite, and enjoy by the Proportions of Artificial Necessities of their own making, and conclude their Pleasures, not by the Satiety, but Lassitude of Nature.

And thus whilst Reason which should set the Bounds, promotes the Extravagance, and encourages the Excess, they lose all the Principles of Wise Conduct, and become so perfectly under the Dominion of *Sense*, that they feel not so much as the Strugglings and Regrets of Reason in their greatest Follies



without Poling, and in such Circumstances it will look like Presumption and Singularity not to be concluded by the major part, and every Man has not the hardiness and resolution to resist the influence of a general Example, and therefore Holy Scripture has caution'd us against the power of Universal Custom, as a most dangerous Temptation, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, Exod. 23. 2. for though to despise the general Sense of Mankind is an impudent affectation of Singularity, and very apt to render us careless and profligate in our Manners, according to the Opinion of the Roman Orator, *Negligere quid dete quisque sentiat non solummodo arrogantis est sed dissoluti*; yet to have too great a value for the Opinion and Authority of Men, and to oppose the power of Example against the Evidence of Truth and Virtue, is a Principle of the most dangerous influence to corrupt Faith and Manners.

And therefore our Blessed Saviour has ascribed the whole pretence of the Jews Infidelity into the influence of this Principle, and speaks of it as a kind of irresistible Temptation to sensual Men, *How can you believe, who receive Honour one of another, and seek not that Honour which cometh from God only?* St. John 5. 44. And the Pharisees have upbraided the Faith of those who Believ'd in our Saviour upon the evidence of his Miracles with the Authority of their Unbelieving Elders, as the most popular Argument and Prejudice against him, *Have any of the Rulers Believed on him?* St. John 7. 48. And

*The Queen at V. PARLIAM.*

And therefore to secure the Courage and Innocence of Human Nature, Conscience must take its Measures from Precept, and not from Example: For he that Governs his Actions by Rule, will have the same Measures of Truth and Virtue every where, and the same Obligation and Encouragement always to embrace and practise them; But he that receives his Faith and Manners from the Opinion and Practise of others, will be Wise and Good by accident, and according to the good Fortune of his present Circumstances, or rather neither Wise nor Good at all; For that Conscience that acts only in compliance with other Mens Actions, without regard to Rule, wants that Principle which is necessary to give the Denomination and Merit of a Good Action.

4. The Fourth Principle of Conduct in Unthinking Men is Temporal Interest: For though all Men are apt to value themselves under the direction of this Principle, and are esteemed Wise and Considerate for Choosing and Governing themselves by it; yet it is no more reducible to the Measures of True Wisdom, than any of the other, and is of a more dangerous and pernicious Influence than all the rest; For it is easie to observe in the general practise of Mankind, that no Principle has that Universal and Irresistible Authority in Changing and Corrupting the Sentiments and Conversations of Men, as Temporal Interest, Sense and Reason, Honour and Virtue,



Faith and Religion, are but small Considerations where Interest is concern'd, and most Men are willing to resign them, as an easie price to promote it: Infallible is the allowed Priviledge of this Chair, and Men of all Persuasions do so quietly submit their Consciences to this Authority, that we may reasonably conclude, though most Men believe all Churches may, yet few suspect Interest can Lye:

To this Men submit with an implicit Faith, and consent with a blind Obedience; for the Proposition that is profitable is always Indisputable, and no Evidence produces so thorough a Conviction, as present Advantage: Other Powers are generally Obey'd with Partiality, Regret, and Hypocrisie, but all the Subjects of Interest bear true Faith and Allegiance, believe Heartily, and obey Sincerely.

*Mammon* in the Scripture Language is styled the God of this World, and is indeed the God of the whole World, and not a Local Deity, appropriated by the peculiar Worship of some particular Parts and Countries; For though other Sins are Personal and National, and prevail more or less according to the particular Tempers and Customs of Men and Countries; yet this Love of Interest is a Universal Infection, and the common frailty of Human Nature, for all Men are more or less Guilty of this Idolatry and Sacrifice to *Mammon*.

And therefore in this Chapter our Blessed Saviour has given a more particular Caution against the  
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fluence of Temporal Interest, as the most general and most powerful Corrupter of Conscience; and if we may Judge of the Sense of our Text by the Context, and Interpret it from the Subject ~~of the~~ of the preceeding and following Verses, it seems to be that principal Offence and Infirmary of the Spiritual Eye, intimated in our Text by the Metaphor of Darkness; For as he has introduced it by directing his Followers to a right Notion of Happiness, (the Foundation of all those Vers. 19.  
20, 21. Principles that are to govern Conscience) and by assuring them that it does not consist in the Earthly Treasures which are Fading and Transitory, but in the Eternal and Durable Treasures of Heaven, so he has concluded it in the Verse immediately following, by asserting the dangerous Inconsistency of the true and false Notion of Happiness, and the great hazard Men run of loosing their Eternal for their Temporal Interest; *You cannot serve God and Mammon*, Vers. 24.

And if we consider the particular Circumstances in which the Christian Religion was delivered, and the general Nature of the Christian Religion in all Circumstances, we must grant that nothing could be more seasonably proposed to the Christians of the First Age, nor can be more reasonably advised to the Christians at all times, then to beware of the dangerous influence of Temporal Interest.

For as a generous Contempt of this World was

absolutely necessary to bear up the Primitive Christian with Faith and Resolution, under the daily expectation of Suffering and Dying for his Religion, so it still is, and will be always the Duty of every good Christian to have a constant Frame and Disposition of Mind to part with all his Temporal Interests, when the Obligations of Religion, and a good Conscience require it.

The Rich Man in the Gospel, who came up so briskly to our Saviour to enquire what he should do to inherit Eternal Life, departed from him Sorrowful when our Saviour propos'd as the Condition of obtaining it, that *he should sell all and follow him.*

The Text says he went away very Sorrowful, because he was very Rich, add very Foolish too, and it will make up his compleat Character, for nothing could be so Ridiculous as to Believe Eternal Life could be too Dear at any Price, for where Infinite is the Purchase, the greatest consideration bears no more proportion to the value of the Thing desired, than the least; for where there is no proportion at all, as betwixt Finite and Infinite there is not, there can be no Degrees of Proportion, as where the loss is Infinite, the greatest gain in lieu of it makes no more Compensation than the least; for he gains as much who gains only *Naboth's Vineyard*, by loosing his Soul, as he that gains the whole World and looses it; that is, neither gains any thing, for the loss being Infinite admits no Compensation.

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Great was the Folly of this Rich Man to make so bad a Conclusion from so good a Beginning, to put so fair a step towards Eternal Life, and then draw back for the Love of his *Mammon* of Unrighteousness.

But this is not the only Fool which has preferr'd Temporal to Eternal Interest, forsaken the True Religion for the Worship of the Golden Calf, and parted with his God to save his *Mammon*.

For Temporal Interest is now become the general Principle of Conduct, the Children of Light are as Wise in their Generation as the Men of the World, and the Christian, though he pretends to Spiritual, yet Governs himself by Temporal Promises, and lives as if he wish'd to exchange his Heaven for an Earthly *Canaan*.

But no Principle is so opposite to the Nature of the Christian Religion, and the proper Measures of the Christians Conduct, as the Considerations of Temporal Interest.

The Christian renounced the World at his Baptism, and it ought to bear no place in his Affections when it comes in Competition with the Obligations of his Religion, he has enter'd his Name in the List of the Spiritual Warfare, and ought to behave himself Manfully against the World, as well as the Flesh and the Devil; He has submitted to the Doctrine of the Cross, and though he is not always in the prospect of Suffering, as the Primitive Christian was, yet he ought always to be in a readiness

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and preparation of Mind to bear it with Cheerfulness and Alacrity, and to follow the Steps of his Crucified Saviour in all the Glorious Instances of Patience, when Providence shall call him to the Tryal; He ought to live as a Subject of that Prince whose Kingdom is not of the World; As a Citizen of the *New Jerusalem* which is above; As an Heir of those Promises which are future, Spiritual and Eternal; and therefore not to be Governed in his Actions by present and Temporal Considerations, for Temporal Interest (though it is the Wifest pretence of Carnal Reason) has no prospect beyond the Happiness of this World, and therefore ought not to be the measure of those Actions for which we are to account in another, nor can be a proper Principle for the Conduct of that Life, which ought to be directed with a principal regard to our future and eternal Happiness.

And these are the Principles that Govern the Actions of Inconsidering Men, for want of the Wiser Considerations of a well regulated Conscience.

They are govern'd by Chance and external Accident, as if there were no inward Principle of Conduct; they are govern'd by Sense, as if there were no Spiritual Eye; they are govern'd by Example, as if they had no Eyes of their own, and were to be directed by other Mens; they are governed by present Interest, as if there were no future Hopes and Fears to Influence Conscience; as if the Spiritual



tual Eye were not to be directed by Spiritual Light, and the Immortal Soul to be conducted in its Actions by the Spiritual Promises of a future Immortality. And that Conscience may be depraved in Principle and Practise, is so evident a Matter of Fact from a View of the general Conversations of Men, that it rather deserves to be made an Argument of Lamentation, than farther Enquiry. Which leads me to the last Particular.

3. The greatest Misery and Misfortune that can befall us, is to have our Consciences depraved and corrupted : If the Light within us be Darknes, How great ? How mischievous is that Darknes ? That our Guide should be perverted, and become our Seducer ? That our Bosom, and most Intimate Friend should be false and treacherous ? That the Fountain of Life should be poysoned ? and the Principle of Truth and Virtue become the fatal Cause of our Error, and the unhappy Instrument and Promoter of our Folly ? That Conscience which was entrusted with all our Interests, and given us by God to direct us into the Ways of Peace and Happiness, should be confederated with our greatest Enemies, and perverted by such Principles which will necessarily mislead us, and render us answerable for all the unhappy Consequences of their evil Conduct, are the most deplorable Circumstances that can befall us.

For though the Natural Eye may mislead us, and not be accountable, because its Conduct is the Effect of Necessary Causes, yet the Male-administration of the Spiritual Eye, is always in some Proportion Criminal ; because all Moral Actions are under the Government of a voluntary Principle, and all Error, as well as the Actions proceeding from it, is originally from our selves, and the Effect of our own Choice, for the Error of Conscience arises from the Influence or Male-administration of the Will, by not attending, or misapplying that Light which should direct it, and no Judgment is erroneous till the Will has complied and consented with the Understanding, for if Error were originally from Nature, and not from the Abuse of Liberty, God would be the Author of Error, as the *French* Philosopher has well observed.

And therefore, though an erroneous Conscience may, and sometimes must oblige, yet it is not in the same Manner, and with the same Security that a right Conscience does, for a right Conscience is sure as well as sound, and always a safe Principle of Conduct, but it is agreed by all the best Casuists, that a Conscience erring vincibly, is an unavoidable Cause of Sin, whether it be resisted or complied with.

And that an erroneous Conscience should bind us to Obedience, proceeds from the necessary Frame and Constitution of Humane Nature, for since the  
Object

Object can move the Will (to give it the Words of an accurate Guide of ' Conscience) no otherwise than it is propounded by the Understanding, the Will must choose or reject as it is proposed, and therefore if it be propounded as Evil, the Will that chooses it under that Formality is criminal and malicious, and if it be propounded as good, the Will that rejects it so proposed, despises Good, for it is so to the Will, if it be so to the Understanding, which is the Judge and immediate Rule of all Humane Actions, and he that does a good thing whilst he believes it to be Evil, does choose the Evil, and refuse the Good, for he does it, because he thinks or believes it to be evil, and therefore is equally disposed to choose real Evil.

*Bish. Taylor,  
Duct. Dub. Bock,  
Chap 3. P. 102.*

And therefore Men should not value themselves upon the Rights and Priviledges of an erroneous Conscience, nor bear up upon that account against the Commands of their Governours, and the Instruction of their Spiritual Guides, who would direct them better, and reform their Consciences.

For the Conduct of an erroneous Conscience has only this Advantage, that it makes the best of bad Circumstances; for where we are by Voluntary Error fallen into the Necessity of Sinning on either Side, the safest way is to follow the Dictates of an erroneous Conscience, it being a greater Sin to do a good Action against our Conscience, than an evil

Action in Obedience to it, the different Degrees of Sin always arising from the Different Degrees of Choice and Malice. And to be safe and secure under the Conduct of Conscience, two things are absolutely necessary.

*First*, That there be a sufficient light Conviction and Perswasion in the Conscience, of the Necessity, Lawfulness, or unlawfulness of the Matter it dictates, and therefore a doubtful Conscience being indetermined to either side of the Question, can inferre no direct Obligation; and this *St. Paul* has confirmed by a general Rule, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, and has apply'd it to the Resolution of a particular Case, in debate amongst the new Convert Christians at *Rome*, about eating unclean and forbidden Meats by the Law; and concludes, *That he that eateth whilst he doubteth, is damned if he eateth, because he eateth not of Faith*, *Rom. 14. 23.* That is, he really Sins in Eating, because he does that Action, of the Lawfulness of which he has no Perswasion, for no Man can have a due Reverence and Regard for God and his Laws, who does any thing which he suspects to be unlawfull, when it may be omitted without hazard of Sinning.

*Secondly*, There must be a Rectitude of Principle to govern and justify the the Perswasion, and this makes the Essential difference betwixt the Erroneous and the Right Conscience; for though the erroneous Conscience, properly so called, has sufficient

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perswasion, and therefore is stiled the Confident, to distinguish it from the probable and doubtful Consciences, which are under imperfect Degrees of Conviction; yet, because its Perswasion is founded in false and mistaken Notions, it can never be a safe and secure Guide. It has, in some Circumstances, Authority enough to oblige us to obey, but never to excuse us wholly from Guilt in our Obedience; for we are always in Difficulties and Hazards under its Conduct, and can never be justified but in part, where the Necessity of Sinning makes it reasonable, of two Evils to choose the least.

Now this Rectitude of Principle consists in those Notices of our Duty, which we derive from the Law of God, contained in the Books of Nature and Revelation, which is the only adequate Rule of Conscience, for God Almighty is the only Lord Legislator, and Judge of Conscience, and the Divine Law the only Rule that can oblige it; and those Men that put themselves under the Government of other Principles, in opposition to that Rule, are in a certain way to Ruine and Destruction.

And therefore it will deserve the Care of every good Christian to be Vigilant and Industrious in the Conduct of Conscience, to preserve it as the Apple of that Spiritual Eye that is to direct and govern us in our greatest Interest of Vertue, Truth, and Happiness, to keep it in a constant Sense, and tender Regard to the Rule of our Duty against the  
Influence



Influence of false Principles and sensual Affections, that we may be able to make a right Judgment of our Actions, and a comfortable Account for them, for the Rule of our Duty is the Measure of our Account, and the Judgment of Conscience upon Action, according to that Rule, is the only Foundation of our present Peace and future Hopes, and nothing but a sincere Discharge of our Obedience by the Rule of our Duties, can secure us the Testimony and Rewards of a good Conscience. *To which Rewards, God of his Infinite Mercy bring us, by the Merits of Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, and Adoration, both now and ever.*

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**F I N I S.**

